

SIDEWALKS

For many years there has apparently been a policy not to build sidewalks in Southern Pines. At present, less than 10 percent of Southern Pines' streets have paved sidewalks on either side. In all, there are fewer than eight miles of sidewalks in Southern Pines. Most of these are in the central business district or on the blocks between the central business district and the East Southern Pines School. In the older sections of town, east of the business district for the most part, paths along street rights-of-way are maintained as pedestrian walks. Individual property owners maintain the paths. This means some paths are excellent and others are very poor. Often they are paved with pine needles, and in some areas they are very attractive. However, because they are privately maintained, they are occasionally not adequate for public sidewalks. In many areas a pedestrian will find that the path ends abruptly in the middle of a block. This makes it necessary to walk in the street or walk across someone's yard until the path resumes on another property.

Probably residents of Southern Pines originally thought that these paths were more attractive than conventional sidewalks. Where they are maintained properly, they are very attractive. Because of the maintenance factor, it would be impractical for the town to accept the responsibility for unpaved sidewalks. However, if aesthetics are the primary objection to conventional concrete sidewalks, then there are many other types of attractive sidewalk paving materials. College campuses often use brick paving, and some newer sidewalks use designs and coarse materials to break the monotony of bare concrete.

The important consideration is that more sidewalks are needed in Southern Pines. Most people do have automobiles and use them for most of their travel in town. Some groups do not have access to cars, however. Children come to mind first, of course, and all the sidewalks in the vicinity of schools should